

Sad but True by MyLungsHaveGoodIntentions

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Language: English

Characters: Billy Hargrove, Dustin Henderson, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Neil Hargrove, Steve Harrington, Will Byers

Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington, Eleven | Jane Hopper/Mike Wheeler, Jonathan Byers/Nancy Wheeler, Joyce Byers/ Jim "Chief" Hopper

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Summary:

When Nancy finds out about Billy's home life, how will either react?

1. 1: The incident

“Thank you again for the ride” Nancy spoke closing Hoppers passenger door.

“No problem at all, Kid. No point in Jonathan taking you home when I’m headed in your direction.” The chief spoke around his cigarette as he pulled away. “Make sure you buckle.”

“Well I appreciate it” Nancy smiled as she fastened her seatbelt. Hopper just nodded in response. He turned the radio up slightly, filling the car with music to drown out the lack of conversation. He wasn’t very good with small talk and had no intention on strengthening that weakness. It didn’t bother Nancy any. Though both her and Jim spent more time around each other, both during the events with the Demogorgans and now at the Byers residence, neither spent much time striking up a conversation with the other. They were content with accepting they were apart of each other’s lives and never felt the need to strengthen that relationship any more than that. This was actually the first one on one time they were ever really required to spend together.

‘Hey chief you there?’ The police radio cackled.

‘On my way home’ Hopper responded pressing down the radio button as he spoke.

‘Before you head home do you mind heading down to Old Cherry Road? Neighbor called in a complaint about yelling..’

‘Cherry? That the Hargroves again?’

‘Yup.’

Hopper sighed, rolling his eyes as he did so. ‘Yea I’ll go check it out.’

‘Thanks, Chief’

He placed the radio back on the dash. “Always something” he muttered.

"You've been called there before? To the Hargroves I mean?" Nancy asked curiously.

"Yup" He spoke, emphasizing the pop of the 'p'. "Had to go down a couple weeks ago" Hopper admitted. "Apparently their neighbor hears some kinda domestic dispute but when I showed up both kids were in bed and both Mr and Mrs Hargrove looked fine. Calm mood, clean house, no marks on anyone.. Seemed like a normal night."

"Did you talk to Billy and Max about it?"

"Poked my head in. Both of 'em were sleepin' it looked like."

"I can go with you.." Nancy blurted out. Realizing she may of sounded too eager to snoop, she rephrased her words quickly. "I mean, I dont mind taking a small detour on the way to my house. So, ya know, you dont have to back track or anythi-"

"-Not really supposed to bring company to these sorts of things." Hopper cut her off. "Could be dangerous. Dont know what were gonna pull up to."

"I know." Nancy spoke quietly. "I just.. I kinda wanna make sure Max is ok. Mike let it slip to me shes been acting funny lately and.. I dont know.. if something actually did happen... I just want to make sure shes ok is all." It wasn't a lie.

Hopper stayed silent for a moment. "Fine. But stay in the car when we get there." Nancy nodded in response. She could tell by the look on his face he wasnt sure if he was making the correct decision by allowing her to accompany him on this call. "Mike said that? About Max acting weird?"

Nancy nodded. "Has El mentioned anything?"

He shook his head. "She wouldnt if Max made her promise not to."

"Even if its something serious?"

He cleared his throat, tossing his cigarette butt out the window. "If she promised then no, she wouldnt break it because itd be lying to Max and friends dont—"

"Friends dont lie. Gottcha" Nancy finished. It was a good rule she supposed, except in situations where it wasnt. Hopefully this wasnt a situation at all but if it was.. well hopefully it wasnt.

Pulling up to the Hargrove residence was just like pulling up to any other house. It seemed like a normal quiet night. Nancy noticed a blue Camaro parked out front and rolled her eyes to herself. "Seems quiet" Nancy stated.

"Sometimes quiet ain't good kid." He commented putting the car in park. "Hang tight I'll be back." Hopper spoke while getting out of his vehicle. He ventured towards the front door, knocking once he arrived and standing firm waiting for an answer.

Nancy watched as he knocked on the door. A man answered, presumably Max's step father, and took a step out side, mostly shutting the door behind him. There was a bit of talking before Hopper returned back to the car and opened the driver door. Without saying a word he grabbed the radio once again from the dash.

'Tracey this is Hop. Send another car down to Old Cherry Road. Seems like something went down here. I'm gonna go in and check it out. Need back up here just incase.'

Moments later a voice responded "Car En-route Hop. ETA 5 minutes. Id suggest just waiting till they show up."

He slammed the radio down and rubbed his hand down his face, then looked at Nancy. "What happened?" She asked concerned. She kept her eyes on the house in front of her, catching a glimpse of Mr. Hargrove looking out the window at them and then shutting the curtain once more.

"He tried telling me everything was fine but I heard something when he first came out. Dont know exactly what I heard but I wanna go inside to check it out. Stay here." He shut the door and began walking towards the house once more. The same gentleman flung the door open as if he was expecting the Cheif to go back to investigate. As he tried to slip outside once more, Jim pushed passed him entering the premises. The man quickly turned around to follow him.

Minutes felt longer then they have before. Nancy felt helpless sitting there just waiting but she didnt wanna get Hop in any sort of trouble by getting out of the car. What if he was already in trouble though? What if she could help? She wasnt sure what to do but decided with more help on the way, she should sit tight. This wasn't a creature from the upside down, this was a person. Hopper could handle this alone, right? Finally the second patrol car showed up. The cop quickly parked and ran to the door with his partner, rushing inside to assist Hopper. Within minutes of that, two of them left the house with the man in handcuffs, a women sobbing from the doorway as she watched him be escorted out. There was another cop still inside, more then likely getting statements from Max and Billy Nancy assumed.

Neil Hargrove was shoved into the back of Hoppers vehicle. Hopper walked back to the driver side and jumped in the front. "Since I was first on the scene I gotta start the paperwork" he said to Nancy shutting the door and starting the car. "Spuds and Reynolds are staying beind for statements and I gotta get this asshole to the station. I'll get someone else on duty to drop you off once we arrive there." He lit up a cigarette before putting the car in drive.

"Is Max ok?" Nancy whispered, trying to be low enough to where the man seated behind them could not hear.

"Yea Kid shes alright."

"Course shes alright." The man behind them spat. "I'm not some monster who would hurt a little girl."

"No, just some monster who beats on his own son" Hopper spat back disgusted. He turned his sirens on and quickly pulled away from the property.

"He aint my son no more." Mr. Hargrove barked. "I aint a father to no faggot." The words he used and the tone of his voice sent a chill up Nancys body. She looked at Hopper and seen the angry expression he wore. This was his kryptonite. After losing his own child, Hoppers always had a soft spot for kids. He may be a prick in a lot of other instances, but one thing he could not do is keep his composure when he knows someone was mistreating their child. He pulled over.

“Hop..” Nancy said placing her hand on his arm. He pulled away and hopped out of the vehicle flinging open the back door. Nancy jumped out as well running to the other side.

“If you’re still looking for a fight you got one you piece of sh—“

“Hes not worth it.” Nancy spoke firmly from behind him. “C’mon Hop.. just shut the door and lets go to the station.” It was crickets. Neil was silent. He was caught off guard.

Jim looked back at Nancy for a split second before forcing his gaze back to Neil. Nancy could see pain in his face in that brief moment. She wasn’t even sure what happened exactly but knew this was not how it should be handled. He must of agreed, slamming the back door shut once more.

“What happened back there?” Nancy questioned in a low voice. Jim ran a hand down his face in response. “Is Billy ok?” She wasn’t sure why she felt concerned for him. He was a Bully. Sure, nobody deserves whatever it was that happened to him, but if anyone did it was Billy. Right? He was an asshole. He literally attacked Steve to the point of unconsciousness a month back and who knows what else he would’ve done if Max didn’t intervene.

“Hes pretty roughed up. He’ll be alright but it was enough to put the kid in the hospital for the night.” Nancy stayed quiet. It was weird. She wanted to say something along the lines of “well what goes around comes around I suppose” but with the way Hopper was acting she knew this wasn’t one of them situations. This wasn’t an act of discipline or a teaching lesson. This probably wasn’t the first time either. Hopper said hed had calls to the Hargrove residence before. This situation was different.

They both got back in the car and headed back towards the station. The ride was quiet, minus the radio that was turned back up.

The next morning at school was also quiet. Billy did not attend as she expected. She was curious if Max was in school. She made a mental note to ask Mike when her and Jonathan picked him and Will up

after school.

During lunch, she spilled the beans to Steve and Jonathan. She had to. Of course she left out what Neil had said in the car about Billy being a f— well insinuating Bill is gay. What did he mean by that? It wasnt a word that was just thrown around.

“You’ve gotta be shitting me” Steve mumbled between bites of his sandwich. “Neil Hargrove put Billy in the hospital?” Nancy couldnt tell if he was asking just to process what he heard. She nodded.

“Dont say anything to anyone” she responded sternly looking between the two boys. “I shouldnt even know this.”

“Is he going to be ok?” Jonathan asked.

“Hopper said he will be but I’m not sure what type of injuries he has.” Nancy answered unwrapping her own sandwich. “I feel bad for him.”

“I dont.” Steve answered as if it was obvious he would respond that way. “The dudes a prick. He had it coming.” He shrugged before biting into his lunch once more.

“Well apparently this wasnt the first time.” Nancy added swallowing her bite. “Theres been calls before about yells being heard from the house but they were assumed to be between Billys dad and Maxes mom. They didnt look much into it i dont think.”

“Why wouldnt they look into it?” Jonathan questioned.

“Hop said when he got there everything seemed normal and Billy and Max were apparently asleep.”

Jonathan sighed. “I hope hes never laid his hands on Max.”

“I dont think so.” Jonathan raised his eyebrow as if asking how she could be so sure. “Mr. Hargrove overheard me ask Hop if she was ok and he was almost offended I asked. I dont think hes ever laid a hand on her.”

“Well she doesnt act out like Billy does” Steve answered as if it was

that simple. “Someones got to put him in line.”

Nancy furrowed her eyes at Steve. “Steve..” she started.

“Dont Steve me.” Steve interjected putting a hand up. “Hes still an asshole.”

“Yea but this gives some clarity” Jonathan suggested. “It kinda makes more sense as to why hes such an asshole.”

“My home life is shitty too” Steve defended. “That isnt an excuse to be a dick.”

“I didnt say it was” Jonathan reasoned. “Just saying it does give a new perspective.”

Steve scoffed.

‘This is why we arent together anymore’ Nancy thought to herself taken back by how cold he was being. She understood his anger towards Billy. Ever since Steve stepped in between Billy and Lucas that night at the Byers, Steve has hated the guy. This was a whole different circumstance. This isnt something you wish on a person no matter how much of a tough guy they are. Or pretend to be? Nancy had seen the size of Neil. He was no larger then Steve and Billy had no problems taking Steve on. Maybe the tough guy act was simply that... an act. Of course she couldnt deny she harbored some of the same feelings Steve spoke about initially towards Billy. She settled on the fact she was mature enough to realize what was going on, even if Steve didnt.

“I’m not saying we should forgive him for what hes done, but I dont think we should hold it against him either.”

Steve stared daggers at her as she proceeded to take another bite of her sandwich. Neither said more on the subject, nor did Jonathan.

2. Chapter 2: The realization

Billy ended up being out of school for the rest of the week. When Monday came around, he was back.

“Car accident” Steve stated at lunch as he opened his brown bag, emptying its contents in front of him. “Thats whats been going around school. People are saying Billy was involved in some crash right outside of Hawkins.”

“I’m sure he doesnt want the truth to get out.” Jonathan reasoned.

“Did you see his face?” Nancy mentioned as she uncapped her thermos. “He still has some bruising. I can only imagine what it looked like last week.”

“Probably like mine did a couple months ago” Steve pointed out.

“Maybe” Nancy half answered, moving her attention towards the other side of the cafeteria. Steve followed her eyes, peering over his shoulder in order to do so. She was looking over at Tommy, Carol and Billys table. If it wasnt for the slight marks still visible along his cheek and the fact he was out a majority of the week prior, Steve wouldnt of been able to guess anything had even happened to the guy. He appeared to be acting like his normal, animal like self.

“He seems fine” Steve commented, watching as Billy closed his eyes and tilted his head back in some fit of laughter. It was probably something Tommy said based off the smug look of satisfaction he wore. Steve rolled his eyes, bringing his attention back to his own table.

“If he didnt seem fine people would probably ask more questions.” Jonathan concluded.

“Actually, I feel like telling people you were in a car crash raises more questions.”

“More questions then if he said his dad caused his injuries?”

Steve shrugged. Both were bad. “I dont know. I’m just saying, most

car crashes that mess your face up tend to mess up other parts of your body. Ya know, broken ribs..." Steve started while swishing his hand through the air. "...Broken arm, broken something."

"I feel bad hes in a situation where he even has to worry about how to cover this up." Nancy chimed in. Why was she defending him again?

"I mean.. yeah." Steve responded. What do you say to that?

"Dont you have gym with him next period?"

"Yeah, so?" Steve asked furrowing his eyebrows.

"Maybe you should try talk—"

"Nancy. No."

"If he doesn't reciprocate you dont have to force it" Nancy sternly stated.

Shes crazy. No way in hell he would be a willing participant in any conversation with that jerk. He turned in his seat slightly and looked over his shoulder once more only to be met by Billys stare. They locked eyes for a brief second before Billy quickly directed his gaze back to his lunch. Steve followed suit and turned back around. "Does he know you went to his house that night?" Steve asked. Nancy looked at him with confusion sprawled across her face. She opened her mouth to question him but didn't have to as he verified the reason for asking before she could. "He was just staring over here."

"I'm not sure." She responded slowly as if she was putting a lot of thought into the situation. "His dad may have mentioned something when he was released but I'm doubtful he knew who I was. I wouldn't of known who he was if I didn't know whos house we went to."

"His dads out?" Steve asked a bit shocked. Nancy nodded. "Wow" Steve stated surprised by the confirmation.

"I know." Nancy agreed with some sympathy in her voice. "I'm pretty sure Billy isnt staying at home right now though."

“What makes you think that?”

Nancy looked at Jonathan, who answered for her. “Hopper was at my house over the weekend. He mentioned to my mom Billys staying with him the next couple weeks.” He admitted.

“Hes staying with Hopper?” Steve spoke louder then he meant to. Nancy looked up quickly to make sure it didnt bring any attention to their table before promptly shushing him.

“Dont yell it to the whole school!” She said wide eyed. “But yes. Thats what he said.”

“Well..” Steve began to speak as he crunched up his brown bag.
“Hopefully Hopper can keep him in line.”

In the locker rooms, Steve began to change out of his clothes and into his gym uniform. Being able to swap his collared shirt and jeans for a t-shirt and shorts felt like the simplest form of freedom. He was attempting to fix his hair (for whatever reason since he knew it would get messed up from physical activity but hey its the 80s) when the room suddenly had a spike in volume. Billy and Tommys voice echoed around the high ceilings as they approached the lockers. Something about some chick named Lauren. Steve ignored them for the most part.

“Damn that accident did you in, huh?” Tommy cackled.

“Fuck off” Billy grunted.

This did get Steves attention. He couldn’t see them in the mirror so he attempted to subtly turn his head. Billy was putting on a shirt which was unusual for him. He was the type of arrogant asshole that never wore a shirt in gym. He probably wouldn’t even wear one to school if there wasn’t some kind of half assed dress code in place. As Billy was rolling the fabric down over his chest, Steve caught sight of the marks on the side of his body. They were more visible then the ones still residing on his face.

“Like what you see, Princess?” Billy retorted with a shit eating grin,

tongue caught between his teeth. Steve's eyes flicked up to meet Billy's within half a second of him realizing Billy noticed him staring. Steve faced forward and brought his attention back to his hair.

"You wish, Hargrove." Steve answered moving a final strand in place. He shut his locker harder than necessary, the clack of it slamming, startling even himself. He turned to face the two other boys.

"I don't know, Steve" Tommy spoke. "Ya look kinda flustered."

What a joke. Was this really happening. He ran a hand through his hair, a nervous tic he had had for as long as he could remember. 'What a waste of time fixing it before class' he thought before noticing it was only the three of them who remained in the locker room. He didn't even notice the others head out?

"You a faggot now, Harrington?" Billy asked raising his eyebrow. There was no malice in his voice when he asked, almost as if that was part of the joke. Tommy broke out into laughter at the question.

"If I was what makes you think I'd be into you?" Steve asked eyeing him. Billy's expression dropped. Tommy directed his attention to Billy.

Billy broke out into laughter out of nowhere. He sounded manic, but then again when did he not? "You've got some bark in you today." He finally spoke as he took a few steps towards Steve, closing the distance. He lowered his voice to where the conversation was now only between them. "Todays you're lucky day, Harrington. I'm not gonna bash your pretty face in again. All you gotta do in return is keep that queer shit away from me."

Steve scoffed, looking down for a split second before meeting Billy's gaze once more. "Here I thought today was your lucky day. You know, cause everyone believed your car accident story."

With no hesitation, Billy grabbed Steve by the neck of his shirt and pulled Steve even closer. "What the fuck did Maxine tell those loser kids you babysit?" Steve was an idiot. What on Earth was he thinking.

“The hells going on in here” A new voice yelled. Steve recognized it as Coach Downey. Billy loosened the grip he had on his shirt. “Mr. Hargrove? Care to explain?”

“Nothings going on” Billy said nonchalant taking a step back.

“The two of you are late.” Coach stated staring at Billy and Tommy. “Get to class.” The two didn’t argue and proceeded towards the exit to the gym. When Steve took step to follow, he felt a hand on his chest stopping him in place. “You good, Harrington?”

“Yea” Steve nodded. “I’m good”

Coach nodded and lowered his arm, allowing Steve passage to finally go to class. Billy and Tommy didn’t mess with him again, but that didn’t mean Steve couldn’t feel eyes on him most of class. Billys eye, more then likely trying to read Steve and figure out where that comment came from. Billy wasnt in the locker room after class.